

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
Western District of Washington

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In the Matter of the Search of

(Briefly describe the property to be searched
or identify the person by name and address)The locations and vehicle more particularly described in
Attachment A

Case No. MJ18-5300

APPLICATION FOR A SEARCH WARRANT

I, a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government, request a search warrant and state under penalty of perjury that I have reason to believe that on the following person or property (identify the person or describe the property to be searched and give its location):

See Attachment A.

located in the Western District of Washington, there is now concealed (identify the person or describe the property to be seized):

See Attachment B.

The basis for the search under Fed. R. Crim. P. 41(c) is (check one or more):

- ☒ evidence of a crime;
- ☒ contraband, fruits of crime, or other items illegally possessed;
- ☒ property designed for use, intended for use, or used in committing a crime;
- ☐ a person to be arrested or a person who is unlawfully restrained.

The search is related to a violation of:

Code Section	Offense Description
21 USC 841(a)(1), 843(b), 846, and 18 USC 924(c), 1956, and 1957	Drug trafficking conspiracy and related offenses, money laundering and related offenses.

The application is based on these facts:

See Attached Affidavit of DEA Special Agent Steve Meyer.

- ☒ Continued on the attached sheet.
- ☐ Delayed notice of _____ days (give exact ending date if more than 30 days: _____) is requested under 18 U.S.C. § 3103a, the basis of which is set forth on the attached sheet.



Applicant's signature

Steve Meyer, DEA Special Agent

Printed name and title

Sworn to telephonically pursuant to Local Criminal Rule CR41(d)(3).

Date: 12/06/2018


Judge's signature

City and state: Tacoma, Washington

Theresa L. Fricke, United States Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF WASHINGTON)
)
COUNTY OF PIERCE) ss

Steven J. Meyer, being first duly sworn on oath, deposes and says:

I. AFFIANT BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

1. I am an "investigative or law enforcement officer of the United States" within the meaning of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2510(7), that is, an officer of the United States who is empowered by law to conduct investigations of, and to make arrests for, offenses enumerated in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2516.

2. I am a Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and have been since March 2017. I am currently assigned to the Seattle Field Division, Tacoma Resident Office. Prior to my employment with the DEA, I worked as a Uniformed Officer with the Secret Service in Washington D.C., from June 2006 to April 2009. I received formal training at the DEA Basic Agent Training in Quantico, Virginia. The four-month Basic Academy included comprehensive, formalized instruction in, among other things: basic narcotic investigations, drug identification and detection, familiarization with United States narcotics laws, financial investigations and money laundering, identification and seizure of drug-related assets, organized crime investigations, physical and electronic surveillance, and undercover operations.

3. During the course of my law enforcement career, I have been involved in investigations of numerous criminal offenses, including the offenses involved in this current investigation. I have participated in criminal investigations of illicit drug trafficking organizations, ranging from street-level dealers to major dealers, to include Mexico-based drug trafficking organizations. These investigations have also included the unlawful importation, possession with intent to distribute, and distribution of controlled substances; the related laundering of monetary instruments; the conducting of

monetary transactions involving the proceeds of specified unlawful activities; and conspiracies associated with criminal narcotics offenses. These investigations have included use of the following investigative techniques: confidential informants; undercover agents; analysis of pen register, trap and trace, and toll records; physical and electronic surveillance; wiretaps; and the execution of search warrants. I have had the opportunity to monitor, listen to, review transcripts and line sheets (prepared by linguists) documenting the content of intercepted conversations involving the trafficking of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and other narcotics, by persons who used some form of code to thwart law enforcement. I have also interviewed defendants at the time of their arrests and have debriefed, spoken with, or interviewed numerous drug dealers or confidential sources (informants) at proffer interviews who were experienced in speaking in coded conversations over the telephone. I have gained knowledge regarding the various methods, techniques, codes, and/or jargon used by drug traffickers in the course of their criminal activities, including their use of cellular telephones and other electronic devices to facilitate communications while avoiding law enforcement scrutiny.

II. PURPOSE OF AFFIDAVIT

4. This Affidavit is submitted in support of an application to search the following locations and vehicles, as further described in Attachment A for evidence, fruits and instrumentalities of drug trafficking and related money laundering crimes committed by the drug trafficking organization (DTO) referred to herein as the CASTRO DTO, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1), 843(b), 846, and 952, and Title 18, United States Code, Sections 924(c), 1956, and 1957, as further described in Attachment B:

LOCATIONS TO BE SEARCHED

- a) Apartment location for Carlos Eduardo LOPEZ Hernandez: Meridian Green Town Homes, Unit 3, 11305 SE Kent-Kangley Road, Kent, Washington; and
- b) Storage location for Carlos Eduardo LOPEZ Hernandez: SmartShop Self Storage, 10919 Evergreen Way, Unit F031, Everett Washington.

VEHICLE TO BE SEARCHED

c) Vehicle used by Carlos Eduardo LOPEZ Hernandez: a black 2004 Cadillac CTS bearing Washington License BGE2872.

5. My knowledge of the facts set forth in this Affidavit is a result of my personal participation in the investigation, my conversations with other law enforcement personnel participating in this and related investigations, and my review of relevant documents. I have obtained and read the official reports prepared by various law enforcement officers participating in the instant investigation, and other investigations discussed herein.

6. I know through training and experience, as well as the training and experience of other law enforcement officers familiar with this investigation, that individuals involved in the distribution of controlled substances and other criminal activity often use vague references and/or coded words and phrases when discussing illegal activity. In this investigation, these communications have been conducted in both the English and Spanish languages, and the participants frequently used coded language to refer to drug-trafficking activity. The Spanish recordings I have reviewed in connection with this investigation were translated into English by individuals fluent in the Spanish language. When coded words and phrases were used in the instant investigation, I have used my training and experience, as well as the training and experience of other law enforcement officers familiar with this investigation and information provided by confidential sources participating in this investigation, to include what I believe to be an accurate translation of these coded words and phrases inside parentheses throughout this Affidavit.

7. Since I am submitting this Affidavit for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause to obtain a search warrant for the storage unit identified above and in Attachment A, I have set forth only the facts that I believe are necessary to establish probable cause for this warrant. As set forth herein, I believe Carlos Eduardo LOPEZ Hernandez is using a Storage Locker, Number F031, at the SmartShop Self Storage,

1 10919 Evergreen Way, Everett, Washington, Unit 3 at the Meridian Green Town
 2 Homes, 11305 SE Kent-Kangley Road, Kent Washington, and a black 2004 Cadillac
 3 CTS bearing Washington License BGE2872, to store drugs, on a temporary or semi-
 4 permanent basis prior to supplying them to other CASTRO DTO members or criminal
 5 associates. I believe LOPEZ also stores a portion of his cash drug proceeds at these
 6 locations or in his vehicle.

7 III. SUMMARY OF PROBABLE CAUSE

8 A. Investigative Overview

9 8. Agents are investigating a drug trafficking organization (DTO) in Western
 10 Washington they believe Juan and Florencio CASTRO Valenzuela and their associates,
 11 including Jesus SARMIENTO Valenzuela, Arturo FRIAS Ceballos, Carlos LOPEZ
 12 Hernandez, Juan HIGUERA Gonzalez, Jaime HEREDIA Castro, Daniel ROCHA Lopez,
 13 Leonel SILLAS Berrelleza, Juan AVILES Berrelleza, Manuel LOYA Soto (aka Jesus
 14 Loya Soto), Oscar CARRILLO Salcedo, Gregory WERBER, Hector URIAS Moreno,
 15 Andrew KRISTOVICH, and many others known and unknown, are operating. This
 16 organization is referred to as the CASTRO DTO and is predominantly involved in the
 17 trafficking of methamphetamine, high-purity heroin, and imitation oxycodone pills. This
 18 investigation started as a local drug investigation by the Bremerton Police Department in
 19 August 2017, and has been expanding in scope ever since that time.

20 9. During this extensive investigation, agents have conducted multiple
 21 controlled and undercover purchases of heroin (totaling around 500 grams) using a
 22 confidential source and undercover agent, and an undercover purchase of
 23 methamphetamine (around a quarter-pound); conducted hundreds of hours of physical
 24 and electronic surveillance; installed tracking devices on several target vehicles and pen
 25 registers on several target telephones; mounted surveillance cameras to watch the
 26 activities at several significant DTO locations; executed several search warrants on
 27 Facebook accounts used by the CASTROs to aid in their distribution of heroin in Western
 28 Washington; identified several high-level international drug traffickers in Sinaloa,

1 Mexico with direct ties to Western Washington; executed similar delayed-notice search
2 warrants at a DTO stash apartment and storage unit; and have obtained authorization to
3 intercept wire and electronic communications over several different phone numbers used
4 by multiple members of the CASTRO DTO in Western Washington.

5 **B. Authorized Interceptions of CASTRO DTO Members**

6 10. On June 27, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States
7 District Judge for the Western District of Washington, signed an Order authorizing the
8 initial interception of wire and electronic communications over TT19, used by Juan
9 HIGUERA Gonzalez. The interception of TT19 began on June 27, 2018, and ended on
10 July 9, 2018. These interceptions helped gather evidence against several local
11 distributors for the DTO and helped agents obtain court authorization to intercept one of
12 ROCHA's phones.

13 11. On July 10, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States District
14 Judge for the Western District of Washington, authorized the interception of wire and
15 electronic communications over TT24, a phone used by ROCHA (at that time, referred to
16 as Jorge ROBLES Perez). Agents activated the intercept on July 11, 2018, and ended the
17 interceptions on July 16, 2018, when ROCHA stopped using TT24 following an
18 unsuccessful surveillance event on July 14, 2018. Despite the short duration of the
19 interception period, the intercepted communications over TT24 showed ROCHA was
20 clearly using TT24 to facilitate drug trafficking activities for the CASTRO DTO.

21 12. Agents were able to intercept suspected drug-related communications
22 between ROCHA (TT24) and other CASTRO DTO members including HEREDIA
23 (using TT25), LOYA (TT27), and SILLAS (TT28). These intercepted communications
24 clearly identified a man named SILLAS (then referred to as "LEO") as ROCHA's
25 Mexico-based manager and a coordinator for the DTO. The intercepted communications
26 over TT24 helped agents identify Cindy LOPEZ and an unidentified Hispanic male
27 (UHM) as wholesale drug transporters for the DTO—both of whom helped deliver at
28 least nine kilograms of heroin, 12,000 pills, and an undetermined amount of crystal

1 methamphetamine to ROCHA on July 13, 2018. Agents used the intercepted
2 communications over TT24 in conjunction with physical and electronic surveillance to
3 watch ROCHA, HEREDIA, and LOYA (then referred to as "MANUEL") during
4 suspected heroin and pill deliveries. Agents also used intercepted communications over
5 TT24 to anticipate and then observe the activities of these same individuals with great
6 success. Unfortunately, during one such attempt at the coordinated use of intercepted
7 communications over TT24 with surveillance, ROCHA detected an agent's presence.
8 ROCHA then stopped using TT24 entirely at SILLAS' direction, changed the location of
9 his drug stash (at least temporarily), and most likely notified HIGUERA, HEREDIA, and
10 LOYA of this incident since HIGUERA and LOYA got new vehicles and phone numbers
11 shortly thereafter.

12 13. On August 20, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States
13 District Judge for the Western District of Washington, signed an Order authorizing the
14 initial interception of wire and electronic communications over TT25, TT31, and TT32,
15 used by Jaime HEREDIA Castro, Daniel ROCHA Lopez, and Manuel LOYA Soto,
16 respectively. The interception of wire and electronic communications over TT25 began
17 on August 20, 2018, and ended on August 23, 2018. Agents did not activate the
18 interceptions of TT31 and TT32 because data from pen registers/trap and trace devices
19 and location monitoring indicated ROCHA and LOYA, respectively, were not using
20 those phones by the time agents received court authorization to intercept them. Agents
21 gained little additional information from such the short period of interception over TT25,
22 HEREDIA's prior phone. However, agents were able to identify further HEREDIA's
23 position within the DTO, and confirmed some of the unidentified individuals using pre-
24 paid phone numbers in contact with HEREDIA were for drug trafficking purposes.

25 14. After HEREDIA stopped using TT25, agents located a new phone number
26 used by HEREDIA and began intercepting wire and electronic communications over
27 another of ROCHA's phones, TT43. On August 28, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B.
28 Leighton, United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington, signed an

1 Order authorizing the initial interception of wire and electronic communications over
2 TT43 (ROCHA). The interception of TT43 began on August 29, 2018, and ended on
3 September 4, 2018, though agents believe ROCHA likely stopped using the device on the
4 morning of September 1, 2018. These interceptions, even for this brief period, greatly
5 helped agents in their investigation in that they helped identify several previously
6 unidentified or unknown members of the DTO, and helped identify their roles in the
7 DTO. These interceptions helped agents anticipate Carlos LOPEZ's return to Western
8 Washington—and then observe his pick-up at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.
9 Intercepted communications over TT43 also helped agents identify Oscar CARRILLO
10 (using TT50 at that time) as a bulk cash smuggler for the CASTRO DTO and served to
11 identify previously unknown high-volume drug distributors for the DTO such as URIAS
12 (then referred to as "TETO") and SCOTT.

13 15. The intercepted communications between the distribution hub for Western
14 Washington (ROCHA, the user of TT43) and the distribution manager in Mexico
15 (SILLAS, who was using TT33 at that time) provided agents with a detailed
16 understanding of what types and how much of each drug ROCHA maintained during the
17 time agents were intercepting communications over TT43. The intercepted conversations
18 also provided agents with detailed knowledge of how much money the DTO earned from
19 the sale of their drugs. On one day, ROCHA and SILLAS even carried out a meticulous
20 accounting of all the drugs and money ROCHA was supposed to have delivered,
21 maintained, or transferred to others over the past month or so. This meticulous
22 accounting allowed agents to seize those same accounted-for drugs and money from
23 ROCHA's residence when he and LOPEZ were not present.¹ Agents recovered over a
24 kilogram of suspected heroin, some suspected crystal methamphetamine, over 3,200
25 genuine or counterfeit oxycodone pills, and over \$160,000 in cash from this seizure.

26
27 ¹ Agents obtained a delayed-notice search and seizure warrant for ROCHA's residence from the Honorable David
28 W. Christel, United States Magistrate Judge for the Western District of Washington, on August 31, 2018, and
executed the warrant that same evening.

1 Agents believe this seizure, on August 31, 2018, is what ultimately caused ROCHA to
2 stop using TT43 during the morning of September 1, 2018.

3 16. LOPEZ then took over ROCHA's job duties for the DTO in Western
4 Washington, and ROCHA returned to Mexico shortly thereafter. On September 11,
5 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States District Judge for the Western
6 District of Washington, signed an Order authorizing the initial interception of wire and
7 electronic communications over HEREDIA's current phone, TT46, just after LOPEZ had
8 reclaimed his role as distribution hub for the DTO in Western Washington. Interceptions
9 over TT46 began on September 13, 2018, and ended on October 11, 2018. These
10 intercepted communications almost mirrored the intercepted communications over TT25
11 (HEREDIA). HEREDIA used TT46 to facilitate his drug trafficking activities, like
12 taking heroin and pill orders from his customers and speaking with the Western
13 Washington distribution hub (Carlos LOPEZ, TT51) about his supply needs. HEREDIA
14 also used TT46 to speak with other suspected higher-level members of the DTO in
15 Mexico and money launderers who were previously unknown to agents. Thus far, agents
16 have been successful in identifying almost all of HEREDIA's contacts on TT46. These
17 interceptions helped moved agents toward achieving their large-scale investigative
18 objectives.

19 17. On September 24, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States
20 District Judge for the Western District of Washington, signed an Order authorizing the
21 initial interception of wire and electronic communications over URIAS' phone (TT48),
22 CARRILLO's phone (TT50) and LOPEZ's phone (TT51). Interceptions over TT48 and
23 TT51 began the same day, and ended on October 17, 2018. Interceptions over TT50
24 began on September 26, 2018, and ended on September 28, 2018 (although agents
25 believe CARRILLO stopped using his telephone on September 26, 2018). The
26 intercepted communications over TT48 and TT51 have been extremely helpful to the
27 investigation. These intercepted communications have helped agents identify over 20
28 additional members of the DTO, including high-volume heroin, crystal

1 methamphetamine, and pill distributors in Western Washington; helped solidify the
2 connection between SILLAS and other high-ranking members of the DTO in Mexico;
3 helped agents identify and gather evidence against three additional bulk drug smugglers
4 from Arizona and California; and, most notably, helped agents identify TT62 as
5 CARRILLO's new phone and aided in the physical surveillance of CARRILLO and
6 LOPEZ in Western Washington.

7 18. On October 18, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States
8 District Judge for the Western District of Washington, signed an Order authorizing the
9 initial interception of wire and electronic communications over CARRILLO's current
10 phone (TT62). Interceptions over this line began on October 18, 2018, and ended
11 November 17, 2018. Interceptions over TT62 have helped agents identify, or begin to
12 identify, additional members of the DTO in Atlanta, Georgia; New York City, New York;
13 Boston, Massachusetts; and Western Washington.

14 19. On November 2, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States
15 District Judge for the Western District of Washington, signed an Order authorizing the
16 initial interception of wire and electronic communications over Juan Carlos AVILES
17 Berrelleza's telephone (TT66). Interceptions over TT66 began on November 6, 2018,
18 and ended on November 8, 2018, when AVILES stopped using the phone.

19 20. On November 14, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States
20 District Judge for the Western District of Washington, signed an Order authorizing the
21 initial interception of wire and electronic communications over Carlos Alejandro
22 CASTRO Perez's phone (TT69) and Carlos LOPEZ's current phone (TT70), as well as
23 the initial interception of wire communications over Gregory WERBER's phone (TT37).
24 Interceptions began on that same day and, with respect to TT37 and TT69, are ongoing.
25 Carlos LOPEZ stopped using his phone (TT70) on or about November 16, 2018, after
26 Sillas advised him of the police search warrant that was executed on Cesar LOYA's
27 residence on November 15, 2018.

1 21. On November 19, 2018, the Honorable Ronald B. Leighton, United States
2 District Judge for the Western District of Washington, signed an Order authorizing the
3 initial interception of wire and electronic communications over Martin GONZALEZ's
4 phone (TT63), and the initial interception of wire communications over Ramon
5 PUENTES' phone (TT64). Interceptions over TT63 began on November 20, 2018, and
6 ended on November 28, 2018, when law enforcement arrested GONZALEZ as he was on
7 his way to deliver multiple kilograms of heroin to the CASTRO DTO. Interceptions over
8 TT64 began on November 26, 2018, and are ongoing.

9 **C. Agents Identify Carlos LOPEZ at Meridian Green Town Homes**

10 22. Initially, agents had identified Carlos LOPEZ as "Octavio Cota Lopez"
11 through physical/electronic surveillance, Facebook research, and telephone
12 tolls/subscriber records analysis. When agents first saw LOPEZ, he was living at the
13 same stash house in Kent where SARMIENTO lived (the trailer at 22025 100th Ave. SE,
14 Kent, Washington). Agents initially thought LOPEZ would be SARMIENTO's
15 replacement, but later determined that LOPEZ held a more supervisory role in the DTO.
16 LOPEZ subsequently moved to an apartment in Auburn associated with Cindy
17 SOLTERO through her credit report. During execution of a delayed-notice search
18 warrant at that apartment (then the DTO stash house) on August 31, 2018, agents found a
19 Mexican passport bearing Cota's photograph in the name Carlos Eduardo LOPEZ
20 Hernandez; LOPEZ had returned to Western Washington that same weekend to resume
21 his duties as a DTO distribution hub. LOPEZ has been the subject of two wiretap orders
22 (using TT51 and TT70). Agents have intercepted hundreds of drug-related
23 communications during those periods of interception.

24 23. On October 24, 2018, agents received court authorization to activate real-
25 time tracking for LOPEZ's then-current cellular phone TT70. For several days in
26 November 2018, tracking data for TT70 indicated LOPEZ was living in Auburn,
27 Washington. Subsequently, agents set out on surveillance to identify LOPEZ's possible
28 new residence. On November 8, 2018, agents observed TV4 (LOPEZ's known vehicle)

1 parked out in front of the BB building of the Pasa Fino II Apartments located at 12212
2 SE 310th St., Auburn, Washington.

3 24. On November 9, 2018, at approximately 10:30 p.m., agents established
4 surveillance at the Pasa Fino II Apartments at 12212 SE 310th Street, Auburn,
5 Washington, but shifted to the Meridian Green Townhomes at 11305 SE Kent-
6 Kangley Road, Kent, Washington, based on electronic tracking on TV4. Shortly
7 thereafter, LOPEZ departed the area, and surveillance was suspended.

8 25. At approximately 5:35 p.m., agents reestablished surveillance of LOPEZ at
9 Soltero's Market at 24202 104th Avenue SE, Kent, Washington. At approximately 6:05
10 p.m., agents observed LOPEZ, in TV4, travel back to the Meridian Green Townhomes.
11 At the townhomes, agents observed LOPEZ walk from TV4 to Building 2, Unit 3.
12 LOPEZ walked into the apartment without knocking, while holding grocery bags.
13 Agents reviewed tracking data for TV4 between October 1, 2018 to December 5, 2018,
14 and discovered LOPEZ made 24 stops at the Meridian Green Townhomes.

15 ***Agents Identify LOPEZ at Meridian Green Town Homes Again***

16 26. LOPEZ stopped using his then-current phone (TT70) on or about
17 November 19, 2018. In an attempt to identify LOPEZ's new number, agents examined
18 phone tolls of his known associates. They identified 206-981-1844 (TT85) as LOPEZ's
19 likely new phone number. On November 29, 2018, agents received court authorization to
20 activate real-time tracking for TT85. Tracking consistently confirmed the device was
21 located in the vicinity of LOPEZ's suspected residence, the Pasa Fino II Apartments,
22 12212 SE 310th Street, Auburn, Washington.

23 27. On November 29, 2018, the United States District Court for the Western
24 District of Washington issued an arrest warrant for Carlos Eduardo LOPEZ Hernandez
25 after a grand jury returned an Indictment charging him and others with drug trafficking
26 crimes.

27 28. On December 6, 2018, at approximately 4:00 a.m., agents found LOPEZ at
28 the Meridian Green Town Homes, 11305 SE Kent-Kangley Road, Unit 3, Kent,

1 **Washington, based on real-time tracking of TT85 and TV4. Agents executed the arrest**
2 **warrant and took LOPEZ into custody.**

3 29. Based on the length of time LOPEZ has been distributing drugs for the
4 **CASTRO DTO, the many times agents have observed LOPEZ conduct suspected drug**
5 **transactions, the many times LOPEZ has delivered bulk cash (drug proceeds) to**
6 **CARRILLO, the many times LOPEZ has met with suspected bulk drug transporters to**
7 **deliver drug proceeds and/or retrieve bulk drug shipments, makes agents believe he**
8 **utilizes multiple stash houses to store drugs and drug proceeds. Agents know the DTO**
9 **has utilized LOPEZ's prior residences, 22025 100th Ave SE, Kent, Washington and the**
10 **condominium in Auburn, as a means to stash suspected drugs and drug proceeds. Based**
11 **on LOPEZ's has recent repeated trips to the Meridian Green Town Homes, agents believe**
12 **he is utilizing Meridian Green Town Homes, 11305 SE Kent-Kangley Road, Unit 3,**
13 **Kent, Washington, as an additional stash house for drugs and drug proceeds.**

14 **D. Agents Identify Carlos LOPEZ's Storage Unit**

15 30. On December 4, 2018, agents observed though GPS tracking data for TV4
16 **that LOPEZ traveled to the SmartStop Self Storage located at 10919 Evergreen Way,**
17 **Everett, Washington. On December 5, 2018, agents requested records from the**
18 **SmartStop Self Storage, 10919 Evergreen Way Everett, Washington. The public**
19 **storage is a gated area and allows access via a personal code. These personal codes are**
20 **specific to each customer and allow entrance and exit to the facility. Agents also**
21 **observed video footage recorded by the SmartStop Self Storage for December 4, 2018,**
22 **that revealed a Ford F150 and a Red Ford Ranger (TV4), enter the facility using the**
23 **personal code for Unit F31. Simultaneously, GPS tracking data for TV4 confirmed**
24 **LOPEZ arrived at the SmartStop Self Storage. Agents observed, through video**
25 **surveillance and GPS tracking data, TV4 drive in the direction of Unit F31. Typically,**
26 **people visit their storage units infrequently or, if they do end up visiting multiple times**
27 **during one day, it is during a significant event (such as a move or other significant life**
28 **event). Drug traffickers operating at LOPEZ's level (that of a high-volume redistributor)**

1 typically have many customers; drug redistributors like LOPEZ will visit their storage
2 units for very short periods because that is where they store their drugs, cash, and
3 firearms. These redistributors will access their storage units to obtain their drugs for sale
4 to customers, secure the drug money received from customers, and secure bulk drugs
5 received from their sources of supply.

6 31. Based on the length of time LOPEZ has been distributing drugs for the
7 CASTRO DTO, the many times agents have observed LOPEZ conduct suspected drug
8 transactions, the many times LOPEZ has met with suspected bulk drug transporters to
9 deliver drug proceeds and/or retrieve bulk drug shipments, I believe he utilizes stash
10 houses. Additionally, the fact that the DTO members of the DTO have utilized prior
11 storage units, including Unit 0063 at Public Storage, 1715 228th Street, Bothell,
12 Washington, and Unit 248B at 1st Avenue Self Storage, 2400 1st Avenue South, Seattle,
13 Washington, as a means to stash suspected drugs, drug proceeds, indicia, and firearms, I
14 believe evidence of LOPEZ's suspected drug trafficking activities and the proceeds
15 thereof will be located at his current storage unit: Unit F31 at the SmartStop Self
16 Storage, 10919 Evergreen Way, Everett, Washington.

17 **E. Identification of LOPEZ-associated Vehicle**

18 32. As noted above, on November 29, 2018, agents received a federal arrest
19 warrant for Carlos LOPEZ. On December 6, 2018 in the early morning hours, agents set
20 out to execute that warrant. At that time, LOPEZ was at the Meridian Green Apartments.
21 During the execution of that arrest warrant, a black 2004 Cadillac CTS bearing
22 Washington license BGE2872 was parked out in front of the apartment where LOPEZ
23 was taken into custody. Agents subsequently employed a narcotics K-9 on the vehicle.
24 The K-9 alerted to the presence of narcotics. I believe, based on my training and
25 experience, and knowledge of LOPEZ's drug trafficking and/or other members of the
26 CASTRO DTO are utilizing the black 2004 Cadillac CTS bearing Washington license
27 BGE2872 to store drugs and/or drug proceeds.

VI. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS

33. Based on my training and experience, including experience obtained through participation in this and other investigations involving the distribution of controlled substances, including those targeting long-term conspiracies responsible for the distribution of controlled substances, and based upon my consultation with other experienced law enforcement agents and officers, I know drug traffickers will often maintain stash residences, safe deposit boxes, storage units, or stash vehicles for the purpose of storing larger quantities of drugs, drug proceeds, or firearms in a location that is separate from their own residences or vehicles.


34. In the case of storage units, I know experienced drug traffickers will often select storage facilities with multiple layers of secured access points. This is usually done for two reasons: first, to make it harder for other criminals to break into by virtue of having several extra layers of security (i.e. security cameras at the facility, a secured main access gate or door to the facility, and a locked storage unit) and, second, to further thwart any rival drug traffickers or law enforcement personnel from easily determining which unit is being accessed by said drug trafficker—as compared to storage units with exterior building access which can easily be seen from public view. Additionally, I know drug traffickers will often store their most prized possessions, drugs and money, tightly wrapped in layers of plastic and inside such a storage facility. This prevents insects, rodents, mold, mildew, and the like from disturbing or destroying such possessions.

35. I believe LOPEZ's entire livelihood is earned through drug trafficking. Much is at stake for LOPEZ (or anyone in such a position) to make sure these valuable items (his drugs and drug proceeds) are secure. If LOPEZ's drugs are lost or stolen, his income plummets (or becomes non-existent). If LOPEZ's drug proceeds are lost or stolen, he will not be able to purchase additional drugs from his suppliers without accruing substantial debt—something any successful drug trafficker works to avoid. As stated previously in this Affidavit, I believe LOPEZ is storing drugs and drug proceeds at Meridian Green Town Homes, 11305 SE Kent-Kangley Road, Unit 3, Kent,

1 Washington, Unit F31 at the SmartStop Self Storage, 10919 Evergreen Way, Everett,
 2 Washington, and in the black 2004 Cadillac CTS bearing Washington license
 3 BGE2872.

4 VI. CONCLUSION

5 36. My knowledge of the entire investigation into the CASTRO DTO; my and
 6 other agents' observations of LOPEZ throughout the investigation; my discussions with
 7 other agents; my review of intercepted communications and tracking data associated with
 8 LOPEZ's phone and vehicle all lead me to firmly believe LOPEZ—and potentially
 9 others—are using the Meridian Green Town Homes, 11305 SE Kent-Kangley Road,
 10 Unit 3, Kent, Washington, Unit F31 at the SmartStop Self Storage, 10919 Evergreen
 11 Way, Everett, Washington, and the black 2004 Cadillac CTS bearing Washington
 12 license BGE2872, to store drugs and drug proceeds and to further the CASTRO DTO's
 13 drug trafficking crimes in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1)
 14 and 846, and that evidence of such, as described more particularly in Attachment B, will
 15 be found at these locations and in this vehicle.

16
 17
 18 
 19 Steve Meyer
 20 Special Agent
 21 Drug Enforcement Administration

22 SUBSCRIBED and SWORN TO before me this 6th day of December, 2018.

23
 24 
 25 THERESA L. FRICKE
 26 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
 27
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ATTACHMENT A
Locations to be searched

This warrant authorizes the government to search the following locations and vehicle for evidence and/or fruits of the commission of the following crimes: drug trafficking and money laundering, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841 and 846, and Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(c), namely controlled substances and/or cash proceeds from the sale of such contraband, and firearms possessed in furtherance of these activities, as further described in Attachment B hereto.

The locations and vehicle to be searched are:

a) The Meridian Green Town Homes, Unit 3, 11305 SE Kent-Kangley Road, Kent, Washington. Unit 3 is on the first floor, with a green door facing the parking area. The search is to include any assigned storage rooms;

b) SmartStop Self Storage, 10919 Evergreen Way, Unit F031, Everett Washington. Unit F031 has a blue roll-up door, and is the last door on the F row of storage units; and

c) A black 2004 Cadillac CTS bearing Washington License BGE2872 and/or Vehicle Identification Number(VIN) 1G6DM577740152937, registered to Carlos Carreon Amador at 1025 Central Ave N, Apt Z102, Kent, Washington.

ATTACHMENT B
Items to be seized

From the locations and vehicle listed in Attachment A of this warrant, the government is authorized to search for and seize the following items, which are evidence and/or fruits of the commission of the following crimes: distribution and possession with intent to distribute controlled substances in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1), and conspiracy to commit these offenses in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846; use of a communications facility in furtherance of a felony drug offense in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 843(b); importation of controlled substances, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 952; possession of firearms in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(c); and laundering of monetary instruments in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1956 and 1957, including the following:

- 1) Any suspected controlled substances, for example, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and heroin;
- 2) Firearms and firearms-related items, including magazines, ammunition, holsters, and body armor, or other dangerous weapons;
- 3) Cellular telephones and other communications devices including iPhones, smartphones, flip phones, and similar devices, which may be searched only for the following items:
 - Assigned telephone number and identifying serial number (e.g., ESN, MIN, IMSI, IMEI);
 - Stored list of recent received, sent, or missed calls;
 - Stored contact information;

- 1 • Stored photographs of narcotics, currency, guns or other weapons,
2 suspected criminal activity, and/or the user of the phone or co-
3 conspirators; and
- 4 • Stored text messages that relate to the above-enumerated federal crimes;
- 5 4) Financial profits, proceeds and instrumentalities of trafficking in narcotics
6 and money laundering, including US currency and other items of value;
- 7 5) Paraphernalia for packaging, smuggling, processing, diluting,
8 manufacturing, weighing, and distributing controlled substances, for example: hidden
9 compartments, scales, blenders, funnels, sifters, grinders, glass panes, mirrors, razor
10 blades, plastic bags, heat sealing devices, and diluting agents such as inositol, vitamin
11 B12, etc.;
- 12 6) Books, records, receipts, notes, ledgers, and other documents relating to the
13 distribution of controlled substances, money laundering, communications between
14 members of the conspiracy, and evidence of the use of apparently legitimate businesses to
15 disguise profits;
- 16 7) Photographs, video tapes, digital cameras, and similar items depicting
17 friends and relatives of the property occupants, or suspected buyers or sellers of
18 controlled substances, controlled substances, and assets derived from the distribution of
19 controlled substances;
- 20 8) Personal books and papers reflecting names, addresses, telephone numbers,
21 and other contact or identification data relating to the distribution of controlled
22 substances, and money laundering;
- 23 9) Financial records relating to controlled substances income and expenditures
24 of money and wealth, to wit: money orders, wire transfer records, cashier's checks and
25 receipts, bank account records, passbooks, tax records, safe deposit box keys and records,
26 checkbooks, and check registers, as well as precious metals and gems such as gold, silver,
27 diamonds, etc.;
- 28 10) Items of personal property that tend to identify the person(s) in residence,

1 occupancy, control, or ownership of the premises and/or vehicle, including canceled mail,
2 deeds, leases, rental agreements, photographs, personal telephone books, diaries, utility
3 and telephone bills, statements, identification documents, and keys;

4 11) Identification documents, including passports, visas, alien registration
5 cards, any travel documents, immigration documents, driver's licenses, identification
6 cards, and social security cards;

7 12) Documents indicating travel in interstate and foreign commerce, to include
8 airline tickets, notes and travel itineraries; airline schedules; gas receipts, bills; charge
9 card receipts; hotel, motel, and car rental statements; correspondence with travel agencies
10 and other travel related businesses; airline, rental car, and hotel frequent flier or user
11 cards and statements; passports and visas; telephone bills; photographs of foreign
12 locations; and papers relating to domestic and international travel; and

13 13) Latent prints and identifying material from items at the residence or in the
14 vehicle.